

No. 709.

The Church
Among the
N e g r o e s





CONVOCATION OF CHURCH WORKERS. ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL, LAWRENCEVILLE, VIRGINIA

The Church Among the Negroes

By the REVEREND SAMUEL H. BISHOP

THE work of the Church for the Negroes in this country began in the personal care and training of slaves by their masters and particularly by their mistresses. In the old registry of Bruton Parish we find thirty-three consecutive pages devoted entirely to the record of baptism of slaves or colored servants. This record extends from 1746 to 1797. During that period there were 1,122 Negroes baptized; and during the year 1750 the record of baptism of Negroes in Bruton Parish alone was larger by one than the total number of infant and adult baptisms of Negroes in the Diocese of Southern Virginia during the year 1903. In 1724, the Rev. William Beach reported to the Bishop of London that he instructed and baptized (during fifteen years) 200 slaves, and that the owners of slaves are generally careful to bring them to baptism. In spite of all the faults of slavery, during the existence of that system in the south there was carried on the most successful missionary activity ever known in the history of the Christian religion; and this activity was not merely incidental or without due thought and purpose. Bishop Meade of Virginia delegated some of his most talented clergymen such as Casleman and Gibson, to instruct the Negroes and to preach carefully prepared sermons to them; and Dr. Hanckel, one of the eminent clergymen of South

Carolina, did the same work in that State. The results of such work are evidenced in such statistics as those given for Bruton Parish and in statistics of parishes like St. Michael's and St. Philip's, Charleston, South Carolina. In St. Michael's record for the year 1818, there were registered 130 colored communicants to 350 white; and in St. Philip's for the same year, 180 colored to 320 white communicants. In 1856 there were in the diocese 3,022 colored to 2,971 white communicants.

The real fact is that notwithstanding the moral wrong of slavery, the Christian people of the South felt deeply their responsibility for the moral and religious training of the Negroes; and to some measure of fulfillment of that responsibility is due the fact that the Negroes acquired during that period so much of ethical character and of the spirit of Jesus Christ as to enable the best of them to become teachers of their teachers, and to make all of them capable of the generous fidelity they manifested during the war. It was not infrequent in religious families of the South to find a white haired, saintly old Negro ministering in the things of God to white and black alike.

There is no way of ascertaining definitely what proportion of the Negroes in this land were at the beginning of the war between the states baptized members of the Church. In 1859 there were recorded 468,000 members of the various churches in the South, of which it is perhaps

fair to assume that more than 50,000 were baptized members of our Church. There are now about 18,000 communicants in the whole Church, ten independent parishes, and about 200 chapels and missions. On the other hand the Methodist and Baptist bodies alone have nearly 4,000,000 colored members and influence eighty per cent. of the total negro population.

Of course such statistics are not wholly reliable as to the inferences they suggest, but they do indicate among other things that a new sense of responsibility is necessary if the Church is to be of any real assistance to the Negro and to the nation.

From the time when the Rev. Absalom Jones, the first Negro ordained to the ministry of the Church in this country, began his work in Philadelphia in 1795, to the present time, much devoted and heroic work has been done; but the present conditions must be unsatisfactory to anyone who loves and believes in the Church, and who realizes how critical is the need of the Negro people in this land, and how serious the Negro problem is likely to be, unless the Christian forces in the country shall awaken to the fact that this problem like all of our great social problems, requires not so much a solvent as a solver. That Solver we believe to be Jesus Christ; and notwithstanding the smallness of our numbers we believe the Church has a peculiar work to do, one of which many of the best colored people are conscious and which they

desire to see her do. Among the reasons for this belief are: The national character of the Church, her organization, her ethical standards, her appeal to a normal sense of form, and her medial position among the churches.

What the Church is Doing

The Church is establishing Sunday and Parish Schools in places where they are most needed.

A devoted priest in Savannah established the first kindergarten for Negro children in the State of Georgia; out of that a good parish school has grown and more than 250 persons have been baptized and confirmed in nine years. The parish is self-supporting and free of debt. Our parish schools, of which there are many doing work similar to that done by the Savannah school, have attracted the favorable and admiring attention of the officers of the Southern Education Board and of the Jeanes Fund. There are ten such schools in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, all in places where such schools are needed, not only because of the inspiration the Church can give, but because proper school facilities are not adequate. The same is true of the five schools in North Carolina and of the sixteen in South Carolina. Under the leadership of Bishop Guerry and Archdeacon Cornish a most valuable work is being done in South Carolina, in which white Church people are interesting themselves and to which they are giving earnest service.

Mrs. Willet, the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Morgan, once rector of St. Thomas's Church, New York, is doing a quiet but beautiful work at Brook Green; and the work which Miss Tucker carried on for thirty-five years at Plantersville, is now being conducted by Miss Sparkmann. It was from Miss Tucker, under God, that the Rev. Samuel Grice got the inspiration which sent him out as a peculiarly successful worker for Christ and his people. Mr. Grice's church and school at Spartanburg, South Carolina, both of which were begun by the present Bishop of Mississippi, have steadily grown in importance and usefulness; and Mr. and Mrs. Grice evince that kind of practical Christianity which makes the Church of essential value to the colored people. In addition to the Church and day-school work they conduct a night school for boys who would otherwise be on the street. Money is greatly needed for a church building.

Mr. Perry's work at Tarboro, North Carolina, was described in *THE SPIRIT OF MISSIONS* for August, 1906, and is one of the most interesting of our Church's activities. There are now eighty communicants, ninety-two pupils in the Sunday-school and 179 in the parochial school. Mr. Perry's son, a graduate of St. Augustine's and of Yale, is principal of the Negro public school and is also helping his father in night school. He has refused other offers at better salary because he thinks his duty is there. This last summer he paid his own way to New York

and took normal training at the Teacher's College, in order to introduce some industrial work into the public school and into the parochial school.

But time and space forbid further specification. The foregoing is enough to show the nature of the work the Church is trying to do all over the south and the possibilities which lie at our hand.

The Church is using godly and practical archdeacons.

No finer and more devoted missionaries are at work in any field than our colored archdeacons. The work of Archdeacon Russell of Southern Virginia is not confined to St. Paul's School, but is equally valuable throughout the diocese. Archdeacon Delaney of North Carolina, for many years vice-president of St. Augustine's School, is preaching a gospel of pure religion and of self respect and intelligent toil. If he finds the water bad where he is being entertained, on Monday morning he starts the family cleaning the well or digging a new one; if crops are poor, gardens waste, meat bought and not home-raised, tactful suggestions as to seed selecting, garden planting, chicken and pig raising are given; and the instances are multiplying of profit from his suggestions. Archdeacon Avant of East Carolina, a real statesman as well as a devoted priest, is a practical trained nurse and a carpenter; and more than one church building has been erected and more than one human life saved by his hand work and his loving skill. Archdeacon Bright

of Georgia (recently appointed), who did such yeoman service in Savannah, already alluded to, and Archdeacon Henderson of Atlanta, are also both loving and wise. Next to the schools there is no force in the south of more possible social and religious efficiency than our archdeacons, and they are illustrating that possibility.

Do the Negroes Want and Need the Church?

There is room for only four brief answers, the first of which is a quotation from a letter of the Rev. J. S. Quarles of Columbia, S. C.:

"In reply to your letter will say my work is very encouraging:—Number of communicants 130, number of Sunday-school children 200, day-school children 336, number of unchurched colored people in the community about 3,500. My methods of reaching the people are many: First I try to teach them through the services. Again, I reach them through the Sunday-school, and the day-school, mothers' meetings, young men's clubs, guilds and societies. Value of property is about \$10,000. There is not an industrial school in Columbia. What we need here is to teach our people to work. I feel it a duty to teach them to help themselves, and when we get to the place that we can not go, then call on the Church. Last summer I took the few faithful, and built the present St. Mary's which cost us \$6,000. My people have paid the most of the debt. I have already told them that they will have the whole debt to pay. Very few people have aided us in



ST. LUKE'S PAROCHIAL SCHOOL, TARORO, N. C.

our great struggle, but the good Lord will fix it all right one day."

The second answer is a little tale. A few years ago a boy graduated from St. Paul's School and went to a northern Virginia town to engage in business as a barber. He had been under Church influence at St. Paul's, and in the town in which he went to live there was no church and a very needy Negro population. He saved his earnings, bought a lot and paid for it out of his own earnings; continued saving money, built a church almost entirely out of his own savings, conducted Sunday-school, gathered together a hundred pupils, started a day-school and *still* out of his own pocket hired a teacher. He has now a parochial school of 200 children besides the Sunday-school, and has only recently asked for help. This tale, though unique in the amount of self-sacrifice, has more than one analogy in spirit and in effort.

The third answer is the fact that three ministers from other bodies have come into the Church with their congregations, and have served over two years without pay, though they have had offers of larger salaries if they would return to their former allegiance. This incident is illustrative of a devotion to the Church which is characteristic of a large number of our people.

The fourth answer is that the Negro communicants of the Diocese of Georgia, numbering 696, contributed during the year 1908-1909, \$3,829.91 for Church purposes; and the 799

parochial and industrial school students contributed for their own education \$3,395.40, making a total contribution from the colored constituency of the Church in the Diocese of Georgia of \$7,225.31.

A few gifts of \$500 each will strengthen old work or establish new in many places. Any sum helps. Will you help us?

Use this coupon in sending your gift. *Do it to-day.*

TO GEORGE GORDON KING, *Treasurer*,
281 Fourth Avenue
New York.

I desire to aid in furthering the Church's work among the Negroes, and enclose \$ _____ for that purpose.

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¶ Copies of this leaflet may be had in any quantity by asking the corresponding secretary, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York, for leaflet No. 709

[5] June 1912, G. P. 3m